AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 (Currently amended). An electrically conductive paste which can be used for forming wiring conductors and which can be co-fired when firing for sintering ceramic layers in a multilayer ceramic substrate provided with the plurality of laminated ceramic layers with the wiring conductors disposed in association with the ceramic layers, the electrically conductive paste comprising

a metal powder, a glass frit, and an organic vehicle,

wherein an inorganic component which is not sintered at a sintering temperature capable of sintering the ceramic layer in the firing and which is an oxide of at least one of Al, Si, Zr, Ni, Ti, Nb, Mn and Mg is disposed on particle surfaces of the metal powder, and

the glass frit has a softening point 150°C to 300°C lower than the sintering temperature.

2 (Previously presented) The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1, wherein the softening point of the glass frit is 650°C to 850°C.

3 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1, wherein the glass frit has a viscosity within the range of 800°C to 950°C. which satisfies $\log(\eta/Pa \cdot s) = 4$.

4 (Currently amended). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1, wherein the content of the inorganic component is 0.5 to 8 percent by weight relative to the total weight of the metal powder and the ~~inorgani1c~~ inorganic component.

5 (Previously presented). A multilayer ceramic substrate comprising a plurality of laminated ceramic layers and at least one wiring conductor disposed in association with the ceramic layers, wherein the wiring conductor is a sintered body of the electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1.

6 (Previously presented). The multilayer ceramic substrate according to Claim 5, wherein the wiring conductor is via hole conductor disposed penetrating at least one of the ceramic layers.

7 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1, wherein metal powder has an average particle diameter of 0.5 to 10 μm.

8 (Canceled).

9 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1, wherein the inorganic component is alumina or zirconia.

10 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 2, wherein the glass frit has a viscosity within the range of 800°C to 950°C. which satisfies $\log(\eta/Pa \cdot s) = 4$.

11 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 10, wherein the content of the inorganic component is 0.5 to 8 percent by weight relative to the total weight of the metal powder and the inorganic component.

12 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 11, wherein metal powder has an average particle diameter of 0.5 to 10 μm.

13 (Canceled).

14 (Previously presented). The electrically conductive paste according to Claim 12, wherein the inorganic component is alumina or zirconia.

15 (Previously presented). A multilayer ceramic substrate comprising a plurality of laminated ceramic layers and at least one wiring conductor disposed in association with the ceramic layers, wherein the wiring conductor is a sintered body of the electrically conductive paste according to Claim 4.

16 (Previously presented). The multilayer ceramic substrate according to Claim 15, wherein the wiring conductor is via hole conductor disposed penetrating at least one of the ceramic layers.

17 (Previously presented). A multilayer ceramic substrate comprising a plurality of laminated ceramic layers and at least one wiring conductor disposed in association with the ceramic layers, wherein the wiring conductor is a sintered body of the electrically conductive paste according to Claim 11.

18 (Previously presented). The multilayer ceramic substrate according to Claim 17, wherein the wiring conductor is via hole conductor disposed penetrating at least one of the ceramic layers.

19 (Previously presented). A multilayer ceramic substrate comprising a plurality of laminated ceramic layers and at least one wiring conductor disposed in association with the ceramic layers, wherein the wiring conductor is a sintered body of the electrically conductive paste according to Claim 13.

20 (Previously presented). The multilayer ceramic substrate according to Claim 19, wherein the wiring conductor is via hole conductor disposed penetrating at least one of the ceramic layers.

21 (Previously presented). A multilayer ceramic substrate comprising a plurality of laminated ceramic layers and at least one wiring conductor disposed in association with the ceramic layers, wherein the wiring conductor is a sintered body of the electrically conductive paste according to Claim 1.

22 (Previously presented). The multilayer ceramic substrate according to Claim 21, wherein the wiring conductor is via hole conductor disposed penetrating at least one of the ceramic layers.